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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 260732Z MAR 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4321
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0520

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IZ
SUBJECT: BAATH PARTY EXPELS TWO MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COMMAND

1. SUMMARY: CHANGES IN PARTY LEADERSHIP APPEAR TO ELIMINATE TWO POTENTIAL RIVALS OF SADDAM HUSSEIN. END SUMMARY.

2. IN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION MARCH 23, BAATH PARTY EIGHTH REGIONAL CONGRESS VOTED TO REMOVE FROM THE PARTY RCC MEMBER IZZAT MUSTAFA AND REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBER FLAYEH HASSAN AL-JASIM. CONGRESS ACTED ON RECOMMENDATION OF REGIONAL COMMAND WHICH CHARGED THE TWO WITH NEGLIGENCE IN FULFILLING PARTY DUTIES AND LACK OF FAITH IN REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES. NAMED AS NEW MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND WERE BURHANADINE ABDUL RAHMAN MUSTAFA (MINISTER OF YOUTH AND RESERVE MEMBER OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND) AND MHI ABDUL HUSSEIN (A LONG TIME PARTY ACTIVIST AND LABOR LEADER).
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CONGRESS ALSO ELECTED JA'AFAR AL-ID AS A RESERVE MEMBER OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND. CONCURRENTLY, PRESIDENT BAKR NAMED RCC MEMBER TAHA YASIN RAMADAN TO SERVE AS ACTING MINISTER OF MUNICIPALITIES, THE CABINET PORTFOLIO VACATED BY IZZAT MUSTAFA, AND MERGED THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AND COMESTIC TRADE UNDER THEIR CURRENT INCUMBENT, HASSAN ALI AL-AMIRI.

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3. SHUFFLE OF PARTY LEADERSHIP RAISES NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT DIRECTION REGIME WILL TAKE IN QUELLING INTERNAL DISSIDENCE. IZZAT MUSTAFA AND FLAYEH HASSAN WERE MEMBERS OF SPECIAL COURT THAT HANDED DOWN EIGHT DEATH SENTENCES IN WAKE OF DISORDERS AT NEJAF AND KERBALA. ONE USUALLY KNOWLEDGE-ABLE IRAQI SOURCE STATES PARTY LEADERSHIP BELIEVES COURT FAILED TO FOLLOW UP LEADS TO SHIA ARMY OFFICERS WHO SUPPORTED SHIA CIVILIAN DEMONSTRATORS AND THAT PURGE OF SHIA OFFICERS IS NOW UNDERWAY. HE SUGGESTS THAT HASSAN ALI, THIRD MEMBER OF THE COURT, REMAINS IN POWER AFTER HAVING LEVELED ACCUSATIONS AT HIS TWO COLLEAGUES. FLAYEH HASSAN WOULD SEEM TO BE VULNERABLE AS SCAPEGOAT SINCE HE HAD PARTY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SHIA COMMUNITY. SINCE HASSAN HAS MORE RECENTLY BEEN GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIAISON WITH AUTHORITIES IN THE KURDISH AUTOMOMOUS REGION AND HAD EARNED PRAISE FOR ATTEMPTING TO REFORM ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES THERE, HIS DISMISSAL ALSO SUGGESTS THAT HE MAY HAVE RUFFLED THE FEATHERS OF PARTY AND MILITARY LEADERS WHO FAVOR A HARDLINE AGAINST THE KURDISH POPULATION.

4. SPECULATION ASIDE, IT IS CLEAR THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS ELIMINATED TWO POTENTIAL RIVALS. IZZAT MUSTAFA HAD BEEN IN GRADUAL DECLINE FOR SOME TIME, ALONG WITH THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE RCC AS MORE THAN A CONSTITUTIONAL FICTION WHICH ISSUES DECREES DICTATED BY BAKR AND HUSSEIN. MUSTAFA RETAINED, HOWEVER, AN INDEPENDENT BASE OF SUPPORT WITHIN THE PARTY, AND HE HAD THE CORRECT RELIGIOUS AND REGIONAL CREDENTIALS. HE HAD SPENT MANY YEARS IN TIP
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PARTY POSITIONS AND HAD A REPUTATION FOR POLITICAL SKILL. PLAYEH HASSAN, ORIGINALLY A SADDAM HUSSEIN MAN, HAD BEEN GAINING IN STATURE THROUGH A SERIES OF KEY GOVERNMEN-MENTAL AND PARTY ASSIGNMENTS, AND HUSSEIN PROBABLY SAW HIM AS AN EVENTUAL RIVAL FOR INFLUENCE WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP GROUP.

5. IN CONFESSIONAL TERMS, THE NOMINATION OF TWO PROBABLE SHIA MUSLIMS--ABDUL HUSSEIN AND LID--TO THE REGIONAL COMMAND IS COMPENSATION FOR THE FALL FROM POWER OF FLAYEH HASSAN. BUT WE BELIEVE THAT ISSUE OF HOW TO DEAL WITH SHIA DISSIDENCE, HOWEVER, USEFUL AS A PRETEXT FOR SACKING MUSTAFA AND HASSAN, IS A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION IN THE MIND OF SADDAM HUSSEIN AS HE MANEUVERS TOWARD THE EVENTUAL DAY WHEN HE MUST DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION TO PRESIDENT BAKR.
WILEY

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